LEED EB Process Narrative

LEED Facility Description and History

Designed by noted architect Arnold Brunner and built between 1902 and 1920, the Howard M. Metzenbaum U.S. Courthouse is located adjacent to Public Square in Cleveland's Central Business District. An impressive structure covering an entire city block, the courthouse is one of the city's most historically significant landmarks. The six-story, granite faced building illustrates the strong classical style of the Beaux Arts architecture. Originally built to house the U.S. Postal services and Bankruptcy Court, the courthouse has been through several renovations to restore its former beauty.

From 2000-2005 the courthouse underwent a meticulous $51 million restoration. Automated building and mechanical systems were carefully installed bringing functionality into the 21st century with minimal impact on historic integrity. The Courthouse is owned and operated by the U.S. General Services Administration and houses the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, U.S. District Court, United States Trustees, USDA Office of the Inspector General, Immigration Customs & Enforcement and the General Services Administration Ohio Service Center. The Bankruptcy Court has four courtrooms with chambers on the first and second floors. The District Court has two historic courtrooms on the third floor. Combined with other federal offices located on the fourth and fifth floors, the building offers 245,368 gross square feet for its 115 occupants working in the building and 20 contractors servicing the building on a regular basis.

Applicant Organization and Team

The General Services Administration (GSA) is the Federal Agency that operates and maintains the portfolio of buildings owned by the Federal Government. GSA is committed to running efficient buildings and exceeding the expectations of their clients, typically other Federal agencies. GSA's mission is to use expertise to provide innovative solutions for customers in support of their missions and by so doing, foster an effective, sustainable, and transparent government for the American People. To this end, GSA has commissioned the creation of a LEED EB Volume Certification tool to use in all GSA owned and operated facilities.

At this facility in particular, the Building Manager, Building Engineer, BAS Specialist, and the Recycle Coordinator collaborated with the regional Facilities Management and Programs Representative. This dynamic team was able to increase the recycling diversion rate, decrease the amount of energy lost through off-hour conditioning and unnecessary occupied-settings, and share successes with the building tenants.

Preparations for the LEED Certification Application

To prepare for the LEED Certification efforts undertaken at the Metzenbaum Courthouse, GSA personnel worked with tenants and contractors to increase sustainable operations at the facility. Contractors were asked to review their purchasing habits and determine where sustainable purchases could replace conventional items. Tenants were asked to review GSA's sustainable policies and compare their practices with GSA's. The Building Engineer reviewed the BAS (Building Automation System) daily to ensure operational efficiency was being achieved and energy conservation measures were active. GSA regional experts visited and toured the building offering their opinions and providing action items for the Property Management team to implement.

Process Highlights

Undergoing the LEED certification process at this building revealed opportunities for better performance and demonstrated good operating procedures. Highlights include:

1. Increasing the diversion rate by adding glass to the recycling stream and coordinating with tenants for reporting purposes. Working with the janitorial contractor a new recycling company was found that accepted glass along with the plastic and aluminum that was already being collected. Furthermore, tenants with their own recycling programs now report their monthly services to GSA for incorporation into the building waste diversion reporting. Implementing regular recycling drives for the building including electronic wastes has also been a huge success not only for waste diversion but also for tenant relations.

2. Building evaluations by the Building Manager, Building Engineer, BAS Specialist, Building Management Specialist, and regional Energy Experts identified several opportunities for no and low cost operational changes along with indentifying the need for an upgraded BAS system for programming of more efficient operations.

Challenges

1. Creating and executing the information needed for a LEED EB Volume Certification tool required the cooperation of dozens of GSA personnel. This was a highlight, as well as a challenge, because the GSA team members rose to the occasion and did a fantastic job.
2. One of the challenges the project team faced was gathering information from tenant agencies in the building in a timely manner.